

JULY 27, 1978

FOCUS: MARTTI AHTISSAARI--U-N'S MAN IN NAMIBIA

ANNCR: THE MAN U-N SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM HAS DESIGNATED AS HIS REPRESENTATIVE IN NAMIBIA IS MARTTI AHTISAARI, A FINNISH DIPLOMAT WHO IS CURRENTLY THE UNITED NATIONS COMMISSIONER FOR NAMIBIA IN NEW YORK. VOA'S GORDON GAIPPE HAS THIS PROFILE.

VOICE: THE JOB OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPRESENTATIVE IN NAMIBIA WILL BE A DIFFICULT ONE. THE PERSON IN THAT POST NEEDS A THOROUGH UNDERSTANDING OF AFRICAN PROBLEMS IN GENERAL, AND THE NAMIBIAN SITUATION IN PARTICULAR. HE WILL ALSO NEED FIRST-RATE ADMINISTRATIVE SKILLS BECAUSE HE WILL HEAD WHAT IS EXPECTED TO BE A THOUSAND-MAN CIVILIAN U-N WORK FORCE WHICH WILL, AMONG OTHER THINGS, SUPERVISE ELECTIONS LEADING TO MAJORITY RULE.

ALSO, THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPRESENTATIVE WILL NEED GREAT DIPLOMATIC ABILITIES, SINCE HE WILL BE CHARGED WITH WORKING OUT ANY PROBLEMS THAT MAY ARISE BETWEEN NAMIBIANS AND SOUTH AFRICANS DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD FROM SOUTH AFRICAN RULE TO INDEPENDENCE.

THE MAN NAMED TO THIS DELICATE POST IS MARTTI AHTISAARI. THIS FORTY-ONE YEAR OLD DIPLOMAT BEGAN HIS CAREER AS A TEACHER IN 1959, AFTER GRADUATION FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF OULU IN FINLAND. HE TAUGHT IN OULU AND THEN WENT ON THE SWEDISH-PAKISTANI INSTITUTE IN KARACHI IN THE EARLY SIXTIES. HE JOINED FINLAND'S MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN 1965, HOLDING SEVERAL POSTS IN THE MINISTRY'S BUREAU FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION, INCLUDING THAT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR. HE MOVED TO THE MINISTRY'S DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES AND WAS ON

THE BOARD FOR NORDIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND ON HIS GOVERNMENT'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRADE AND INDUSTRIALIZATION AFFAIRS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. FROM THERE, HE WENT ON TO SERVE AS FINLAND'S AMBASSADOR TO TANZANIA AND WAS ALSO ACCREDITED TO SOMALIA AND MOZAMBIQUE. HE LEFT THAT POST TO TAKE THE JOB OF UNITED NATIONS COMMISSIONER FOR NAMIBIA IN NEW YORK, IN JANUARY OF 1977. IN THAT POSITION, HE LED U-N EFFORTS AIMED AT BRINGING INDEPENDENCE TO NAMIBIA.

MISTER AHTISAARI ASSUMES HIS NEW AND DELICATE JOB WITH THE BACKING OF U-N SECRETARY GENERAL WALDHEIM, AND THE APPARENT CONFIDENCE OF ALL THE PARTIES INVOLVED.

MISTER AHTISSAARI, WHO IS MARRIED AND HAS ONE SON, WILL BE SPENDING MUCH OF THE NEXT YEAR IN NAMIBIA AS HE COORDINATES THE TERRITORY'S MOVE TO INDEPENDENCE.